

sale that any native work has had, nor have there been many works published in the country that have more than returned to the publisher the actual outlay on the work. Indeed, even this fortunate result, in the few instances there are, has only been achieved by an active out-door canvass among the patrons and friends of the author—and by this questionable proceeding only, and not by any interested demand for the works, have these books found a remunerative sale. And who will estimate, what statistics would fairly represent the money invested and losses incurred in the various literary ventures that have been made here and there and now and again in the country, and which have found no appreciative response from the people? Is there an author in the Dominion but could tell of the "once high hopes that now he dead," or a publisher, but could give a bitter experience of his would-be generous and patriotic projects in the field of Canadian literature?

The fault cannot all lie at the door of the publishers or the writers; and it surely is not altogether in the character of the literature that this utter disregard for it is to find an excuse. For, considering the comparative immaturity of the Dominion, and the uncongenial surroundings in a young country like ours, repressive of that culture and taste for literature, it is surprising how many names one may count as being "worthy of record" on the roll of our country's "Best Authors," and how many works, on many subjects, that might "fitly shine" in a national literature.

Certainly it is not either in the apathy or lack of taste for reading of the people that this matter of which we complain is to be accounted for. In contradiction of this supposition one has only to turn to the statistics of importation from abroad of the books, magazines, and periodicals of the day to find that this is not the cause. This literature floods the country from every source, and finds access to every little village and back township: but, in this circumstance, a clue may be found to somewhat explain why our own literature is not more encouraged and fostered. The issues of the British and American press, especially the former, are now so popularized and made attractive, and the facilities of our book-houses are now such as to bring within every one's reach the important current works of the most notable writers; and while so much of the best literature of the day is taking the shape of cheap serial publication—it is not perhaps to be wondered at that our people should be such large patronizers of this imported "balm"—though our home literature should, meantime, be left to starve.

Notwithstanding that we find in this fact a circumstance to account, in some measure, for the neglect of our native literature, there is, we fear, a low estimate of that literature in the minds of the people, and a total indifference to and interest in the writers of the country, only to be explained in the theory expressed in the words of the proverb, that "a prophet is of no account in his own country."

To every reflecting mind, this is wrong, and

has a tendency to prevent the writers and thinkers among us, who are generally sensitive to a degree, from giving to the press the results of their labour and thought. It further is objectionable in retarding the development of a literature, which, since we have aspired to a national consolidated power, we should seek to make national and to keep pace with our progress—social, industrial and political.

We trust ere long to find a change in respect to this feeling, and we shall be glad, in calling attention to this matter, if we may incite a more patriotic and generous regard for and interest in our young literature, and a disposition to concede that just need of praise and encouragement to the struggling native writer which may help him one day to adorn the "may be" proud literature of our new Dominion.

THE GOVERNMENT BOOK-SHOP.

"*The Journal of Education* v. *The Canada Bookseller*.—Why not, with equal consistency, "attack the Militia Department for supplying "military coats, trowsers and caps; the stationery office for supplying stationery to the departments; the dockyard for building ships, "instead of buying them from 'the trade,' and "a host of other ways in which the government "provide for the wants which arise in the various branches of the public service? Thus, the "public schools are intrusted to the care of the "Education Department; and it is bound to see "that they are most efficiently provided for, both "with teachers and the best and most extensive "variety of good sound reading books, and not "left to the mercy of hundreds of interested "parties whose only motive, except in a few instances, is 'gain.'"—*Journal of Education*, April.

The above extract appears in the last No. of the organ of the Education Office, in noticing the appearance of the first No. of "*The Canada Bookseller*," and referring to a criticism of ours on the Department's Book Store, in which we took exception to the necessity for an establishment which made use of the public purse but to interfere with the legitimate book trade of the Province, and, without any compensating public benefit, retard the progress and development of an important business in the country. But, before going further, we would ask, Why "left to the mercy of hundreds of interested persons," &c.? Are the booksellers of the country a set of rascally extortioners, cormorants and "Shylocks," a band of unscrupulous mercenary rogues, that the "teachers and the taught" of the public schools should not be left at their mercy in buying a grammar, a geography or an arithmetic?

We admit the "gain" as an object in doing business, (though Bookselling is the slowest "gain"-making of all businesses we know of,) but is the "gain," the honourable and legitimate profit of the bookseller, any more greedy or despicable than the gain of any other trader?

Is it so, however, that the gain is all on the one side? Wasn't there something that leaked

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